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ENG 3504-001: Conspiracy, Paranoia, and Trauma in Literature and Film

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English 3504, Section 001: "Fella, you don't know what this story means": Conspiracy, Paranoia, and Trauma in Literature and Film

Instructor: Dr. Robert Martinez

Office: Coleman Hall 3371

Office Hours: Mondays, 1-3 PM; Wednesdays 5-6 PM; and by appt.

Course time: MW 3-5 in Coleman 3691 & Fine Arts 1210 (in Doudna)

Course website: <http://www.martinezliteraria.com/eng3504/>

Course Description:

In this course, we will focus on film and literature that respond to key political, social, and philosophical challenges of the late-twentieth century and emerging twenty-first century. Specifically, we will examine how film and literature attempt to capture, represent, and explore themes of paranoia, conspiracy, and trauma in our political and social reality. Some of our films and texts will have their roots in major cultural events (such as the political assassinations and scandals of the 1960s/early 1970s, the Vietnam War, the conditions of the Cold War), while others will focus on more subtle social and technological developments and their impact on humanity. Crucial to this class will be the question of identity and the nature of truth—in other words, how do we process shocking or violent events and attempt to make sense of them? What is evil, and from where does it come? How do perplexing experiences affect our sense of personal and national history?

Course Expectations:

- Students are required to attend all film screenings. Most screenings will take place in Doudna 1210 Lecture Hall, unless otherwise noted.
- Students will engage in enthusiastic class discussion. "Enthusiastic" means come to class prepared to share your ideas and interpretations about what you have read or watched.
- Students will write short analytical responses, called "Analysis Tasks," on films and literature. Of the at least 13 different texts (books or films) we will study, students must complete 6 Analysis Tasks during the semester, with at least 3 focusing on literature/novels read in class and 3 on films studied in class.
- Students are required to have all reading assignments completed for class. Reading quizzes will be given if I sense that assignments are not being completed.
- Students will write a final term paper (10-15 pages) and complete a "late-term" exam and final exam.

Grading:

- Analysis Tasks: 30% (combined total)
- Late-term Exam: 20%
- Final exam: 10%
- Participation/discussion/reading quizzes: 20%
- Term paper: 20%

Required Texts (at Textbook Rental):

- Tim O'Brien, *In the Lake of the Woods*
- J. G. Ballard, *Crash*
- Sebastian Faulks, *Engleby*
- Martin Amis, *Dead Babies*
- Pat Barker, *Union Street & Blow Your House Down*
- David Bordwell & Kristin Thompson, *Film Art* (9th edition)
- Kelly Oliver, "Witnessing and Testimony" (essay, class handout)

Required Film Screenings:

- Oliver Stone, *Platoon*
- Ben Wheatley, *Kill List*
- Michelangelo Antonioni, *Blow-Up*
- Francis Ford Coppola, *The Conversation*
- Alan Pakula, *The Parallax View*
- Don Siegel, *Dirty Harry*
- Michael Powell, *Peeping Tom*
- Antonio Campos, *Afterschool*
- Alex Karpovsky, *Rubberneck*

Tentative Class Schedule – Film & Literature – Fall 2013

Date	What's Happening in Class	Homework
Mon., 8/19	Introduction to course: class expectations/rules, discuss course themes, freewriting exercises.	Start reading Film Art: Read the following in <i>Film Art</i> : pp. 118-138; 148-155 pp. 167-173; 173-180; 191-203 pp. 212-218; 223-235 pp. 274-298 Begin work on film terms worksheet for <i>Film Art</i> reading.
Wed., 8/21	Using film language to talk about film: discuss <i>Film Art</i> and study examples.	Read Oliver's "Witnessing and Testimony." Psychoanalysis of Freud/Lacan (class handout). Finish handout on film terms.
Mon., 8/26	Discuss details of psychoanalysis, trauma theory and identity formation; discuss Oliver essay.	
Wed., 8/28	Watch Oliver Stone's <i>Platoon</i>	Complete Analysis Task on <i>Platoon</i> for next class. Start reading O'Brien's <i>In the Lake of the Woods</i> , pp. 1-40.
Mon., 9/2	No Class – Labor Day	Continue reading O'Brien's <i>In the Lake of the Woods</i> , pp. 41-81.
Wed., 9/4	Discuss <i>Platoon</i> . Due: have completed Analysis Task in class.	Continue reading <i>In the Lake of the Woods</i> , pp. 82-122.
Mon., 9/9	Begin discussion of <i>In the Lake of the Woods</i>	Continue reading <i>In the Lake of the Woods</i> , pp. 123-173.
Wed., 9/11	Watch Ben Wheatley's <i>Kill List</i>	Complete Analysis Task on <i>Kill List</i> for next class. Continue reading <i>In Lake of the Woods</i> , pp. 174-254.
Mon., 9/16	Discuss <i>Kill List</i> . Discuss <i>In the Lake of the Woods</i> (up thru page 254). Due: have completed Analysis Task in class.	Finish reading <i>In the Lake of the Woods</i> , pp. 255-303.
Wed., 9/18	Finish discussion of O'Brien's <i>In the Lake of the Woods</i> .	Start reading Martin Amis's <i>Dead Babies</i> , pp. 3-83.
Mon., 9/23	Discuss theories of satire and opening of <i>Dead Babies</i> .	Continue reading Martin Amis's <i>Dead Babies</i> , pp. 84-124.
Wed., 9/25	Watch <i>Dirty Harry</i> .	Complete Analysis Task on <i>Dirty Harry</i> for next class. Continue reading Martin Amis's <i>Dead Babies</i> , pp. 125-165.
Mon., 9/30	Discuss <i>Dirty Harry</i> (Kael and others in-class reading) Due: Analysis Task in class.	Finish reading Martin Amis's <i>Dead Babies</i> , pp. 166-206.
Wed., 10/2	Finish discussion of <i>Dirty Harry</i> and <i>Dead Babies</i> .	

Mon., 10/7	Watch <i>The Parallax View</i>	Complete Analysis Task on <i>The Parallax View</i> for next class. Start reading J.G. Ballard's <i>Crash</i> , pp. 7-40.
Wed., 10/9	Discuss <i>The Parallax View</i> . Due: Analysis Task in class.	Continue reading <i>Crash</i> , pp. 41-81 224)
Fri., 10/11	Fall Break	Continue reading <i>Crash</i> , pp. 82-122.
Mon., 10/14	Discuss opening of <i>Crash</i> , pp. 7-122.	Continue reading <i>Crash</i> , pp. 123-143.
Wed., 10/16	Watch Michelangelo Antonioni's <i>Blow-up</i> .	Complete Analysis Task on <i>Blow-up</i> for next class. Continue reading <i>Crash</i> , pp. 144-184.
Mon., 10/21	Discuss <i>Blow-up</i> .	Finish reading <i>Crash</i> , pp. 185-224.
Wed., 10/23	Finish discussion of <i>Crash</i> .	
Mon., 10/28	Watch <i>The Conversation</i> .	Complete Analysis Task on <i>The Conversation</i> for Monday.
Wed., 10/30	Watch <i>Peeping Tom</i> .	Complete Analysis Task on <i>Peeping Tom</i> for next class.
Mon., 11/4	Discuss <i>The Conversation</i> and <i>Peeping Tom</i> . Due: Analysis Tasks for each film in class.	Read Pat Barker's <i>Blow Your House Down</i> , pp. 247-288.
Wed., 11/6	Finish discussion of <i>Conversation</i> and <i>Peeping Tom</i> . Begin discussion of <i>Blow Your House Down</i> , pp. 247-288.	Continue reading <i>Blow Your House Down</i> , pp. 289-339.
Mon., 11/11	Discuss <i>Blow Your House Down</i> , thru page 339.	Finish reading <i>Blow Your House Down</i> , pp. 340-416.
Wed., 11/13	Watch <i>Afterschool</i>	Complete Analysis Task on <i>Afterschool</i> for next class. Finish reading <i>Blow Your House Down</i> , pp. 340-416.
Mon., 11/18	Discuss <i>Afterschool</i> and conclusion of <i>Blow Your House Down</i> .	Study for exam!
Wed., 11/20	Late-term Exam in class!	Term paper due soon!
Mon., 11/25- Fri., 11/29	No Classes – Thanksgiving Break	Work on Term paper!
Mon., 12/2	Watch <i>Rubberneck</i> .	
Wed., 12/4	Discuss <i>Rubberneck</i> .	Term paper due Monday, 12/9, by 4 PM in my office mailbox, Coleman 3155!

Final: Thursday, Dec. 12, 2.45-4.45 PM